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## **Agencies Unite to Increase Economic Opportunities for Minority-Owned Law Firms**

**WASHINGTON (October 16, 2014)** — The U.S. Department of Commerce’s Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) and the National Association of Minority and Women-Owned Law Firms (NAMWOLF) have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) aimed at increasing economic opportunities presented to minority-owned law firms, while also assisting minority business enterprises in accessing quality legal services.

“This partnership provides an ideal avenue through which MBDA can expand its services to minority-owned firms in the professional services industry,” said MBDA National Director Alejandra Y. Castillo. “It also supports our continued effort in helping to grow, transform and diversify our minority business community.”

MBDA maintains a national network of 44 Business Centers equipped with specialists that help the nation’s minority-owned firms grow through access to capital, contracts, and new markets. NAMWOLF is a nonprofit trade association comprised of minority and women-owned law firms and other interested parties throughout the United States. NAMWOLF has a membership of 130 law firms across 35 states.

“We are thrilled to have executed this MOU with the MBDA and look forward to working with them to help minority-owned businesses get off the ground and reach their full potential,” said Joel Stern, CEO of NAMWOLF. “Our firms are well positioned to help minority-owned businesses procure top notch high quality services in a myriad of legal areas.”

A major provision of the MOU includes establishing a referral system whereby NAMWOLF will refer its members to the MBDA Business Center network for business development assistance and technical support. Likewise, the MBDA Business Centers will refer its clients to NAMWOLF for training, education, and association with other firms and corporations dedicated to increasing diversity. The MBDA Business Centers will also have access to a pool of NAMWOLF member law firms to whom it can recommend its clients for legal services.

***About the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA)***

MBDA, [www.mbda.gov](http://www.mbda.gov), is the only Federal agency dedicated to the growth and global competitiveness of U.S. minority-owned businesses. Our programs and services better equip minority-owned firms to create jobs, build scale and capacity, increase revenues and expand regionally, nationally and internationally. Services are provided through a network of MBDA Business Centers. After 45 years of service, MBDA continues to be a dedicated strategic partner to all U.S. minority-owned businesses, committed to providing programs and services that build size, scale and capacity through access to capital, contracts and markets. Follow us on Twitter [@usmbda](https://twitter.com/usmbda).

***About the National Association of Minority & Women Owned Law Firms (NAMWOLF)***

NAMWOLF, [www.namwolf.org](http://www.namwolf.org) founded in 2001, is a nonprofit trade association comprised of minority and women-owned law firms and other interested parties throughout the United States. NAMWOLF's mission is to promote diversity in the legal profession by fostering successful relationships among preeminent minority and women-owned law firms and private/public entities. Our vision is to achieve equity in legal opportunity through minority and women-owned law firms. We advocate for all minority and women-owned firms, and we have a membership of 130 law firms across 35 states. NAMWOLF has over 135 major corporations and public entities that have signed a commitment to dedicate at least 5% of their outside legal dollars to minority and women-owned law firms.

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